

CHAPTER 6 EMERGENCY MOVES

6-01 General Information

6-01.1 Emergency Defined

California Law makes special provisions to accommodate the movement of vehicles/loads when responding to and returning from an “emergency”. The California Vehicle Code (CVC) Division 15, section 35002(c), defines an emergency as “....a condition which poses an imminent threat of loss of property or a hazard to life, as determined by the public agency charged with responsibility to respond thereto.”

For the purposes of this chapter, issuance of emergency permits to utility and railroad entities are processed the same way as stipulated for emergencies declared by public agencies if the emergency meets the same criteria as defined above. These entities will be subject to the same provisions as applicable for public agencies.

6-01.2 Special Provisions

Special provisions made by the California Vehicle Code and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) regarding emergency movement are discussed below.

A. CVC Exemption:

California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 35002 exempts certain vehicles from the size and weight requirement of Division 15 as follows:

1. CVC 35002(a)(1) & (2) refers to Authorized Emergency Vehicles (AEV's) as defined in CVC 165 and provides an exception that is applicable at all times;

This includes fire trucks and any other vehicles that can legally operate with red lights and sirens and does not require any action on the part of the Department.

2. Section (c) refers to those vehicles that are not AEV's, but are used during emergencies, and provides a limited exemption for their movement.

This includes any other “...vehicle owned, operated, or rented by any public agency which is being used in responding to or returning from an emergency” The statute goes on to authorize the transporter to “operate as required, if a reasonable effort is first made...to obtain verbal permission....”. The statute also provides “.... when the vehicle is returning from the site of the emergency,.... either obtains a permit at the location of the emergency or makes a reasonable effort to obtain verbal permission..., and obtains a written permit for that use.... not later than three days after the date of the emergency.”

B. Caltrans Special Provisions:

Emergency moves are exempted from the following Department policies:

- ◆ Hours and time of move
- ◆ Prohibited moves on red routes
- ◆ Weekend moves for purple weight multi-vehicle combinations, etc.

Other Department policies must be considered in comparison to the equipment size and the requested route, and waived where necessary. Whenever normal permit policy is waived in order to move a large load/vehicle to the emergency, the need for pilot cars and CHP escort shall be considered. When appropriate, pilot cars and/or CHP escort shall be required. No permit vehicles/loads are authorized to exceed bridge capacity. Bridge capacity will be observed.

6-02 Emergency Permit Procedures

Authorization for emergency movement shall be made by the Department through the issuance of a single-trip permit, or a verbal permit according to the emergency permit procedures described in Section 6-02.

6-02.1 Notification of Emergency

Reasonable effort must be made to notify the Department of Transportation prior to the extralegal vehicle/load movement. Notification of an emergency will normally come to the Department from the responsible public agency, but may be made by a utility and/or railroad entity applying for an emergency permit. To obtain emergency permits from Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (regular office hours) the Caltrans North or South Region office shall be contacted and every effort shall be made to issue a single-trip permit. After 5:00 p.m. and before 8:00 a.m. the Headquarters Communications Center shall be contacted and movement may be authorized by the issuance of a verbal permit. The phone numbers for the above stated offices are listed in Section 6-03.

Once the appropriate representative is contacted, the applicant shall state the following:

- ◆ Applicant's name.
- ◆ Name of the agency or entity requesting the move.
- ◆ Nature of the emergency.
- ◆ Name of any or all contact persons and their telephone numbers.
- ◆ Location of the emergency and the route intended to use.

The Caltrans permit representative shall call back the agency or entity declaring the emergency and verify the authenticity of the emergency. If the permit representative is unable to contact the agency or entity declaring the emergency, the permit representative will issue the verbal permit if in his or her judgement the emergency conforms to the definition as stated in section 6-01.1. In that case, after issuance of a verbal permit, the permit representative will follow up on verifying the emergency. If the permit was issued and there was no emergency declared by an agency or entity, the hauling company will be reported to Headquarters permit branch and will acquire compliance points as noted in chapter 7, section 7-05.

6-02.2 Single-Trip Permits

If an emergency is requested during workday hours, every effort shall be made to issue a single-trip permit to the requesting transporter. Permit policy pertaining to the issuance of a single trip permit shall be followed. Exceptions are stated in this chapter.

6-02.3 Verbal Permits

If an emergency move is requested after workday hours, the Headquarters Communications Center shall be contacted, and an emergency move may be authorized by the issuance of a verbal permit.

When the Headquarters Communications Center is notified, a representative shall page the on-call Department representative from either the north or south region office. The Communications Center shall have one emergency pager number for both offices. The page will automatically go to the north region office on even months and to the south region office on odd numbered months. The Communications Center shall be equipped with the following for after hour emergency moves: the emergency pager number and the phone numbers for the on-call personnel for both north and south region offices. The emergency permit writer will do the following:

6-02 Emergency Permit Procedures (Continued)

- ◆ Note all details relative to hauling equipment, load, loaded dimensions, weight, origin and destination, and route.
- ◆ Verify the adequacy of the requested route.
- ◆ Make a reasonable effort to verify the authenticity of the emergency as per section 6-02.1 of this chapter.
- ◆ Give verbal approval for the move.
- ◆ Notify the Department's and CHP's Communication Center that verbal approval has been given to move an extralegal vehicle/load. Relay pertinent information about the transporter, route, load, and any other information such as time of move, or movement during inclement weather.
- ◆ File the information with the Permit Office for use when a permit application is submitted.
- ◆ Issue permit when application for written single-trip permit is submitted.

Note: If a verbal permit is authorized, the applicant must still obtain a written single-trip permit from the Department within three days of the emergency as stated in CVC 35002(c). The Region must retain a copy of the application for the use in assessment of infrastructure damages, if any occurred. The permit will be issued by the permit writer giving the verbal approval.

6-02.4 Return Trips

On the return trip, the permit applicant shall be subject to all typical permit rules (i.e. -may not cross bridges that do not have the capacity for the load moved, travel with pilot cars, etc.). The public agency returning from the site of the emergency is liable for any damage to State Highways and structures as per CVC 35002(d). Return trip permitted under verbal approval requires the public agency to obtain a written permit within three days as required by CVC 35002(c). Return trip permits will be processed using the same procedure as the verbal permit issued to the emergency as outlined in section 6-02.2. Verification of the emergency is not required for return trip permits.

6-02.5 Enforcement

Caltrans and the CHP have worked together to develop appropriate permit policy and enforcement policy for emergency moves. CHP enforcement policies are contained in the Highway Patrol Manual Section 82.6. The CHP has developed enforcement policy to properly respond to verbally issued permits and may take appropriate enforcement action after the fact, if necessary. CVC 35002 provides for the movement of extralegal vehicles/loads during an emergency, but the statute does not exempt carriers from CVC 35783 when written permits are issued.

6-03 Emergency Permit Phone List

When permits or verbal authorization are needed to transport equipment to an emergency, the offices listed below shall be contacted. To obtain permits from Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. the appropriate Caltrans region office shall be contacted. After 5:00 p.m. and before 8:00 a.m. the Headquarters Communications Center shall be contacted.

CALTRANS HEADQUARTERS COMMUNICATION CENTER	PHONE NUMBER
HEADQUARTERS COMMUNICATIONS	(916) 653-3442

CALTRANS REGIONAL PERMIT OFFICES	PHONE NUMBER
NORTH REGION PERMIT OFFICE	(916) 322-1297
SOUTH REGION PERMIT OFFICE	(909) 383-4637

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL COMMUNICATION CENTER	PHONE NUMBER
SACRAMENTO DISPATCH CENTER	(916) 861-1300
	FAX (916) 861-1346